Appl. No.:   09/997,340
Amdt. dated January 7, 2004
Reply to Office action of October 17, 2003

<u>Amendments to the Specification:</u>

Please replace paragraph [0017] with the following amended paragraph:

[0017] In broad terms, the preferred embodiments of the present invention address reconciling physical inventory of computing resources against a main asset management database with sufficient efficiency that the reconciliation process can produce an updated main asset management database in a time span shorter than the assets and asset locations are subject to change. Given that the preferred embodiment is directed to computing resources, this time frame must be relatively short-small. While the preferred embodiments were developed in the context of managing computing assets, and they will be described in that context, it must be understood that the methods and systems described herein could be used for any asset management system and are not limited to tracking just computing assets.

Please replace paragraph [0018] with the following amended paragraph:

[0018] Figure 1 shows a flow diagram of a first portion of the preferred embodiments of the invention. The process starts at block 10. A first step of receiving and reconciling physical inventory data preferably starts by scanning a location code identifying a particular location, as indicated at block 12. In the context of taking a physical inventory of computing devices, this location preferably refers to a place, within the corporation or within a particular site of a corporation, where computing assets are placed. The location, which may also be referred to as a seat, uniquely identifies its location. The location code is preferably such that it may be represented in a bar code format which may be scanned by typical scanners. The step of recording the location of the computing asset is preferably accomplished by way of a hand held scanner capable of reading bar codes and storing read information within scanner memory. The location may also provid an index to provide owner name information, or the owner name may be entered by way of the scanner. Although any of an array of

Appl. No.:   09/997,340
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scanners may be utilized in this capacity, the preferred method and system involves involve the use of a scanner made by Point of Sale System Services, 40 Jytek Drive, Leominster, Massachusetts 01453-5966. The particular model of the scanner used from this supplier was the Ultra, advertised as a programmable bar code scanner with display, key pad and bar code printer.

Please replace paragraph [0027] with the following amended paragraph:

[0027]   Referring again to Figure 2, the next step preferably involves reconciling the physical inventory as embodied in the intermediate database 48, against the corresponding records in the copy of the main asset management database, as indicated at block 26 of Figure 2. With reference to Figure 3, reconciling the physical inventory against the copied asset database preferably takes place by way of a web user interface 54. That is to say, a person or persons responsible for reconciling the physical data against the corresponding entries in the asset management database preferably performs this task by means of web access. Web access is preferably provided by an Internet Explorer® web browser, however, any available web browser may be used for this purpose. By way of the web browser, the person responsible for reconciling the physical inventory data against that of the main asset database invokes a reconcile program 56. The reconcile programs initially ask for a user ID and password, which are then preferably used for creating audit trails as to changes in the main asset database. Once past the log-in stage, the reconcile program invoked by the web browser, preferably written in HTML or ASP programming language, pulls corresponding records from the intermediate database 48 and the copy of the main asset database 52 and displays that information on the screen. While it may be possible to identify "corresponding assets" by any of a number of identifying indicia, preferably the asset code is used for making this determination. Consider for purposes of example, and without limitation, that at a particular location within the physically inventoried location that a laptop computer has an asset code 111. In the physical inventory, this asset code is associated with a location where that

114194.01/1662.41500   Page 3 of 9

Appl. No.: 09/997,340
Amdt. dat d Janu ry 7, 2004
R ply to Office action of October 17, 2003

asset was found. Preferably the ~~reconciled~~ reconcile program 56 pulls corresponding entries from the intermediate database 48 and the copy of the asset database 52 based on this asset code. If the particular laptop computer with the exemplary asset code 111 is in the same location as of the physical inventory as reflected in the asset database, then no change is required with respect to that asset, and thus the record is marked as accepted.